

HOUSE OF LORDS
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ANNOUNCEMENTS

This is HOUSE OF LORDS, a zeen by, for and about publishing, publishers, GMing and GMs. It runs no games, and is available to publishers and GMs only. It is composed primarily of the thoughts of its publisher, and a great many letters on topics relevant to publishing a dipzeen in the modern world. Most importantly, this is a forum for those with experience to share the wealth.

This zeen also exists as a vehicle for Mark Luedi's subzeen, GOING STEADY, on the subject of a new publisher's handbook. Any comments on the subject should be addressed to Mark. Also making an appearance here is KINDER, KUCHE, UND KIRCHE -- an infozeen of the US/OGP Orphan Service. Scott Hanson writes that, and any comments/questions on it should be addressed to either Scott or me. KKK could very well become another semi-regular feature here.

You can get this zeen any number of ways. 1) Send me a number of stamps, or set up an account of real money and I will send it to you for 35¢ per issue (this is a change, folks). 2) Set up a trade, all for all. 3) Write for it! Anything that gets published here will earn the writer from 1 to 3 issues of HOL. Most will earn two. Obviously, I prefer method #3 -- it's the best for all parties.

The 1983 Dipdom Census is moving right along, and should be finished by the end of the month. If you have not yet sent in your address list, DO SO NOW! I'll be able to squeeze in any last minute lists without too much trouble, but I have to have them before I finish the input. And remember, if you submit your list, you get a copy of the finished product for free. Should be really good.

And now, on to the matter at hand....

OLD BUSINESS

HOUSE OF LORDS - THE CONCEPT

(Steve Hutton/NO FIXED ADDRESS) HOUSE OF LORDS seems like a good idea. Best of luck with it.

(Ron Brown/MURD'RING MINISTERS) Thanks for the first two copies of HOUSE OF LORDS. I'd appreciate getting it for as long as you decide to publish it.

Is it necessary? (The publishing of HOL.) Undoubtedly not. However, anytime you are presenting a forum for discussion, it is a positive effort on the hobby's behalf. As long as you, as its publisher, feel some satisfaction in performing such a hobby service, then it's justified. I only hope you do indeed receive plenty of positive reinforcement for your efforts.

HOL #2 was interesting. I enjoyed the sampling of other publishers' opinions on the matter of polls. Looking forward to more....

((Thanks, Ron, glad you're interested. As for sampling other pubbers' opinions, how about letting us have a sample of your opinions? You know, if everybody just sat back and sampled, there wouldn't be a whole lot here to read! So go ahead, take the plunge. This is one case where you definitely get out of it what you put in...or more.))

(Eric Ozog/DIPLOMACY BY MOONLIGHT) HOUSE OF LORDS is OK I guess - the forum on polls was good. I suppose I'd have something to say about it but my mind is someplace else, rather - 2000 miles west someplace else.

((That's certainly understandable!))

(Jim Meinel/THE PRINCE) Received both RETAL and HOL in good shape - both look outstanding! I was encouraged to see you take the stand that HOL is for pubbers only. Your point is true - no one knows what a pubber has to go through until they do it - I sure didn't, looking back.

The response was great! It seems you've hit on a good idea notwithstanding Red's comments. I'll try to keep contributing on a regular basis - I'm glad you stretched my comments out!

(Jim Woodson/RAGING MAIN) Sorry it took me so long to get back to you. HOUSE OF LORDS looks like a good idea and you can count me in to participat when I get the chance.

(Ed Wrobel/POLITESSE) *Asterisks indicate new topics

*Loved the green cover of HOL (also liked the last 2 RETAL covers. Admitting that you are under the control of Satan and that you house is infested with bugs despite being located in Rockville takes real publishing courage. Huzzah!) Speaking of which, how about "Appearances" as a topic? More than graphics but less than zeens in general. Seems like most zeens are uglier than the Chicago White Sox.

MORE ON...HOUSE OF LORDS: THE CONCEPT

(Going to the Series, by the way? I have my ticket requests in. You're winning a bet on the O's somewhere, aren't you?)

*Keep HOL elitist! - let the peasants get RETAL. Besides, half of "The Hobby" publishes anyway. Now that you have a subzeen (if you "correct" my spelling, I'll hit your fingers with a heavy wooden ruler), you are halfway to poll. GOING STEADY is a much better name than GOON SQUAD. I suggest that you and Luedi change the name each month but always keep the same initials. Isn't that clever?

((Far too clever for me, I'm afraid. Oh, changing the name each time would be no problem. It's keeping the same initials that'd be the killer. And what did you say about your spelling?))

(Robert Sacks/KNOWN GAME OPENINGS) Somehow an overwhelming call for nonpartisanship reminds me of a partisan position. One group's nonpartisan concensus is an off-the-wall crackpot crude partisan attack in (or on) another group.

((Depends on how it's handled. I guess you'll have to wait and see.))

I would prefer to discuss the Handbook in HOL, leaving GS to be the official report.

((That'd be great, except I want to have very little to do with the Handbook from an organizational standpoint. I already have plenty to do, and don't need the extra work. If Mark wants to have a "discussion" section in GS and an "official" section in GS, that's fine. I don't really see the need for the split though. I repeat, send ALL comments on the Handbook to Mark Luedi. I don't want them, and will not print them.))

I agree with Berch: people who cannot receive or participate in HOL are interested in HOL are interested in polls. Therefore, the topic should not be discussed in HOL.

((If we follow that line of reasoning, then, since somebody is bound to be interested in everything, there is nothing we can discuss here!))

(Mark Berch/DIPLOMACY DIGEST) I still feel your idea of restricted distribution is elitist and contrary to common sense. You say, "Actors and audiences are both interested in theater reviews, but for actors it is far more acute." Not necessarily, not always. A given actor may be genuinely uninterested, and a patron may make his time-&-money decision based solely on the review. The discussion of the polls was a perfect example. People such as Baumeister and Sacks can hardly be said to have an "acute" interest in the polls; in fact, they appear to have none whatsoever. Surely there are non-pubbers with more interest than that. I don't know if people have sent in subs on the basis of Runestone Poll results, but I know "sample" requests have been made on that basis because people have told me that.

At any rate, the discussion on polls was the best single discussion I've ever seen on that topic. Would you mind if I made it available (via xerox) to the readers of my zeen?

Incidentally, what about former publishers? Subzeen editors?

((The letters from Kathy Byrne and Eric Ozog should answer your last questions. As for xeroxing the discussion on polls, you'd have to elaborate on that. Will you be sending it to all your subbers, or on request only, or what? Will it be in DD? What exactly did you have in mind?)

((To me, it is common sense to only ask someone who will know the answers. And I will choose who I wish to subsidize by restricting my subber list within reason. Would it make you feel better if I charged \$5 per issue to non-pubbers, and then lifted the restriction? And I have yet to hear from all these supposedly "interested" non-pubbers. Where are they? And my answer to the question of elitism is: "So what?" What's bad about it, at least in this case? It's more a practical matter than mere prejudice.))

(Randolph Smyth/FOL SI-FIE) Sorry for the delay in replying to your call for an expression of interest in a "publishers' zeen." My tardiness is probably due to a lack of interest in the project: the mechanical requirement of publishing can be grasped by an intelligent ten-year-old and shouldn't need discussion; house rule and other procedural matters are getting a good airing these days in several existing zeens; which only leaves (as far as I can see) items of personal taste and style which, despite your good intentions, always seem to degenerate into unproductive personal attacks when addressed by most US publishers. I wish you well, but see little future in the idea.

MORE ON...HOUSE OF LORDS: THE CONCEPT

((If the "mechanical requirements of publishing can be grasped by an intelligent ten-year-old," why are so many zeens imperfect? Why do so many seemingly intelligent adults have so many problems? Why did you never send me a sample of FOL SI FIE despite three requests and an International Reply Coupon from me? Maybe it's not as simple as you seem to think?

((Perhaps you could explain to me why most Canadian pubbers seem to be so impossibly arrogant? Do you really think that Canadians are all goodness and light, while Americans all just lust for each other's blood? I can name enough instances of peaceful Americans and rabid Canadians to shoot that notion down easily. Don't you think that only having three "major" Canadian zeens as opposed to at least ten times that many American zeens might be a factor here?

((I had hoped you would have something productive to say about the Runestone Poll. After all, you do run the thing, and I would assume you therefore have some justification for doing so. Maybe you could tell me what the point of it all is?))

(Terry Tallman/NORTH SEALTH, WEST GEORGE) I am genuinely surprised by the response you got but only because I'm inclined to forget how much some people like to talk about polls and ethics and whether or not the non-players and non-GMs should even be allowed to rub shoulders with us elite types. While I consider any forum valid for exchanging ideas what I saw here was the same group on always sees voicing the same opinions they always voice whenever they haven't been asked for a while. I really don't mean this to discourage you but rather to encourage you to force this happy band to sit down and come up with some new ideas and solutions to those problems that habitually plague the hobby.

Question: If the Runestone poll is totally bogus, why run it? Make its defenders prove its worth.

Question: Ethics--What is there besides not intentionally screwing people?

Question: What insights have your assorted readers got that will allow me to publish my zeen in a way that makes me feel better about it and not just the critic?

Question: Why do all those people in GRAUSTARK play there and nowhere else, would three GRAUSTARKS bring three times as many people into the hobby?

What insights can be brought to bear on postal dip from other postal groups? From postal chess with its thousands of postal members in the US? From commercial PBM groups with as many as 500 to 600 players on a single board?

I see the majority of the GMs and pubbers as having very severe tunnel vision, not due to a lack of input from the players as you mentioned from last issue but rather from doing things the same way they've been done for the last 20 years.

Larry Peery and I dispute over the proper nomenclature for the hobby as it existed 10 or 15 years ago. He refers to it as the golden age, I call it the stone age. And soft metals aren't anywhere in sight yet.

As often as I toss flak at people in my own zeen and elsewhere there is a common thread in what I want to do and what you appear to be trying to do. That is to not let the hobby stagnate but at the same time to not repeat the same mistakes and feuds that were around during the so called golden age.

I don't really care who does or does not read HOL. But if that is going to be an issue, or what will be discussed in an issue or if rehashing Tretick becomes a regular topic so be it. Rattle those pubbers cages, it will do us all some good.

((You bring up some very good points here. While I can't make an educated comment on the state of Dipdom ten years ago, I can't say as it's changed a whole lot in the five years I've been around. Sure, we've got more xerox now, so zeens are prettier and have more pictures. Extrapolating back from that, I don't know what the big deal is about this "golden age" stuff. I don't believe the writing was that much better (certainly not if what I read in DD is typical), just that the writers may have been more experienced. Certainly they had feuds back then. Perhaps it's just that Dipdom was that much smaller that made it seem so much nicer. That, and those who can remember back that far will remember the good before the bad. As far as I'm concerned, the only "golden age" is the present.))

((All your questions are good ones, but I think that the third one is the best. As soon as I mailed out last issue I got to thinking why I'd chosen ethics to be the next topic. Perhaps it was a desire to go after "interesting" topics first - perhaps it's because it's such a big topic. I don't know, but I didn't particularly like it. Maybe we'll come back to it. Yes, my main objective here is to give pubbers a place to talk about publishing. In doing that, I hope to give you the opportunity to either get something off your chest, or maybe learn a few new tricks that'll make it easier for you. I'll try to keep this in mind in the future. Keep the faith!))

POLLS

(Mark Berch) In response to your comment on page 11, no. DD's Runestone ranking hasn't been as unvarying as you think. It's been in the top 5 twice, and as low as the mid-20s.

As for "love votes" -- which I've called buddy-buddy votes in the past -- I think there is a way to handle them. In certain sports, such as diving, there is a subjective factor, the votes of a panel are adjusted by dropping the high vote and the low vote. This could easily be done in the poll -- just lop off the top say 5-10% of the vote as a buddy-buddy vote and an equal number off the bottom as grudge votes. I should add that I've attempted to persuade both Leeder and Smyth to do this, without any success. Leeder was not persuaded there was a problem with buddy-buddy votes.

I agree, the best way to improve turnout is the use of pre-printed ballots.

A larger sample is inherently more meaningful. People who get only one zeen are unlikely to vote. In the British zeen poll, you must get at least 2 zeens; I'd suggest a similar requirement here.

You sum up by saying there's "adamant indifference." Come on! 10 pages of discussion and you call it adamant indifference??

((Sure. By that I meant that a great deal of the respondents said something to the effect of, "Yeah, polls are great. But I don't do anything because of them." I'm not so sure that a larger sample is "inherently" more meaningful. Unless you can go to the extreme, and have every subber to every zeen at least aware that a poll is being run, your poll is going to have holes in it. Zeens that do not plug the poll will naturally finish lower, because the people who are most likely to give you a high vote are your own subbers. If those subbers happen to be fringe Dipdomites, it's quite possible you won't even get enough votes to qualify (GRAUSTARK comes to mind). You've given me an idea, though, for the census...thanks!))

(Ed Wrobel) *As one whis relatively indifferent to polls, but anxious to appear responsible, I should express my utter lack of interest publicly. But having professed indifference, am I not then taking a stand of sorts? Gasp! Quite a difference, wot? And yet is the dilemma not false - at least from the standpoint of my own interest - but quite real to those who would induce me to casy my votes monthly after careful consideration of my own subjective tastes and the objective strengths and weaknesses of various amateur publications and referees. I would think that such is indeed the case. Flail on, ye hankerers, I, and my 900+ brethren sit blissfully astride the river, laughing when we are glad, eating when we grow hungry and dozing when we wish.

((I don't know exactly what you're trying to say here, but you said it splendidly!))

(James Woodson) Yes, there are a lot of polls, but I don't think too many. Well, maybe? In any case, this is my first year as a publisher and I've not been "in" a poll before. I'm sure that when and if RM is ranked in a poll, I'll be watching. If the people rank me well, I'll certainly be happy and proud. If not, I'll probably be disappointed and try and find out why. As to which poll is best, they all have their appeal, but I think that the simple ones are the best. Those voting only have to say, "I like this, I don't like that."

One thing that's certain is that the more people who participate, the better indication of the truth is shown.

((Wouldn't you want to know why RM finishes well as much as why it would finish poorly? Or do you just figure to cruise merrily along if all is going well? What method would you use to find out why you finish poorly - a survey of your own, just ask around, or what?))

(Scott Hanson/IRKSOME!) Polls, generally, are pretty useless. Then again, polls in real life are pretty useless as well. I don't see any harm in them, though; but they certainly aren't worth the bother to worry or get upset about. People who try to do well in polls generally do (any time you vote for a zeen or GM, you're really voting on the person, right?). People who don't give a shit about popularity don't do well. It's about as simple as that.

So why do I bother running a poll? I do think it's fun for those who care to vote. And I certainly have a good time with it. (Though last year I spent too much time with a complicated scoring system.) And my particular poll (Freshman Poll for new zeens) is of a least bit interesting. But only a bit.

((If you vote for a zeen you vote for the person? Depends on how you look at it, but I think that's at least part of it. Should it be?))

MORE ON...POLLS

(Julie Martin/THE THRILL OF AGONY, THE VICTORY OF DEFEAT) I may not have anything interesting to add to this discussion, but wot the hay? You never know what some people will find interesting.

First of all, let me introduce myself. I'm one of the immature, childish jerks referred to last issue in a letter on polls. I have been guilty of every offense against the Runestone Poll the writer named: casting "0" votes for "decent" zines, voting for non-existent zines, giving the zine which I co-publish "10" votes, rating each issue of it as a separate zine, and disguising the name. In fact, I'm probably guilty of some other offenses which he didn't think of.

Fortunately, there is a solution for people like me. You see, I only vote a zine "10," "5," or "0." If I "love" (really like) it, I give it a "10." If I "hate" (really dislike) it, I give it a "0." If I'm indifferent to it (really don't care), I give it a "5." Why don't I use the rest of the numbers? Because it's not worth a headache to me to try and figure out the difference between a "6" and a "7." So all you have to do is throw out "love" and "hate" votes (as some have suggested), and you'll end up throwing most of my ballot away. That way, I can't screw up the poll.

Unfortunately, there's one thing wrong with this reasoning. Some of my votes do have validity, frivolous and imprecise though they may generally be, or appear to be. I really feel RETAL is a "10" zine. I really feel the zine that the letter writer calls "number one" is a "0" zine. I voted it a "0" last year and the year before (before the "feuding"). And both years, my reason was the same - I find it extremely boring. (By the way, how was my vote "protected" by the pollers' "discretion"? I have had several people tell me how I voted.)

Unfortunately, some people apparently think they know better than I why I vote the way I do. They "know" I only want to get revenge on someone or screw up the poll, so therefore, they should be allowed to "correct" my vote for me. Somehow it brings to mind an old "Bernie Oaklyn" story. Seems a player sent in orders to good ole Bernie by which he intended to stab one of his allies. But when the adjudication came out, he found that his orders had been changed by the master, and that he in fact had not stabbed. When he asked Bernie what had happened, he was told, "Oh, I changed your orders so that they were more in keeping with your previous agreements with your ally."

Anyway, I'm not trying to destroy the credibility of the Runestone Poll. I never thought it had any credibility to begin with. Believe it or not, there are people who take the poll even less seriously (and whose votes are thereby even less valid). I was given a 9.8 as a GM one year, and a 1.0 the next. I had GM'ed a grand total of one season the first year, and a grand total of two the next. Must have been those jerks. But wait - were they giving a low score to a decent GM, or a high score to a rotten GM, or just a score to a non-existent GM? Does it matter?

Poll results only matter to me in a negative way - I'd rather not know. I've been extremely lucky to have run a subzine for two years (off and on) and to have avoided being mentioned in the polls. If anyone tries to vote for me next year, I'll ask them not to, or at least to give me a "0." To me, poll results are like "courtesy copies" from other zines - I'd rather remain ignorant. I think we should do away with hobby-wide polls and stick to intra-zine polls. Who knows better than the readers and/or the players?

One last thing - why do I vote in 'em? Truthfully, I only do it if a ballot is sitting around and I've got nothing better to do at the time. But in writing this, I've realized I should do unto others as I would have done unto myself. So I don't think I'm going to vote in anymore hobby polls. (I will send in my Marco Poll ballot since I've already completed it.) I would encourage other people who care as little (or less) as I do not to vote either. We're only messing up the results anyway. (Great, now I'll probably be accused of "organizing a boycott" to mess up the polls by lowering the sample size.)

((Perhaps, perhaps.... Of course, your suggestion to do away with all hobby-wide polls will never come to pass, for exactly the same reason we'll never have a pollster that gets total cooperation from everybody: there's just too much diversity for it to happen. Some people will always want it, some won't, and nothing will change.

((So you don't want to participate in the poll. That's an interesting notion. Hey, poll-runners, will you voluntarily not include GMs/zeens that don't want to be rated? Or would this be considered screwing up the poll. Personally, I think that if you don't want your name to appear in the final results, you should say so in advance, and your request should be granted. We ran into a situation like this recently when Kathy Byrne was nominated, against her wishes, for the Don Miller Award. What if she had won?

((A 10/5/0 rating scale does seem a bit severe. Are there any alternatives to the simple 0-10 scale that you might feel more comfortable with? Maybe A/B/C/D/F like in school? Or +/-/0, and only print the final score - no averaging involved - that'd get rid of grudge votes.))

MORE ON...POLLS

(Robert Sacks) Voting serves two legitimate purposes: one is to elect candidates to office or to membership or to awards - in this grudge and friendship votes are perfectly good. The other is to adopt resolutions - in this grudge and friendship votes are questionable, but at least better than logrolling (the uncritical exchange of favors). Voting in polls serves neither legitimate purpose: some egos, and reputations, and subscription lists are boosted, perhaps unfairly; some are hurt, perhaps unfairly.

Creating a monopoly, an official hobby pollster, will not improve the situation. The solution is elimination. I suggest discussion on the proposition that polls are harmful and that the publishers should give no aid, mention, or credence to any of them.

((Ah, but isn't something like the Runestone Poll a sort of "award?" Best zeen and GM in Dipdom, or something similar?))

(Steve Langley/MAGUS) After reading all of the comments on polls I came to the conclusion that trying to be objective in a subjective universe is a waste. I don't know why I get as little feedback as I do. I was exaggerating with my comment about Mark Berch being the majority, but I get less feedback than Don Williams does. I got more reader response and support by losing the use of my computer than I have for any other thing in MAGUS. It might be that MAGUS is too bland to elicit lots of comment. We try to keep it as light as possible.

((Yeah, there really isn't a whole lot to MAGUS to comment about. Lots of good press, maybe an article - usually "Flat Evil" which is pretty good - Patter, FIAT BELLUM, and that's all. What else is there? I bet you got a bunch of stuff on the "not for print" topic, though.... Go ahead, Steve, just go out there today and be subjective! Then again, if we don't have at least a few objective types, won't we lose that perspective altogether?))

((Didn't you run a readers' survey not too long ago, or was that somebody else?))

(Rod Walker/DIPLOMACY WORLD) Very nice issue of HOUSE OF LORDS indeed. The discussion of polls was excellent, if inconclusive ... about what we might expect. I want only to add a small comment. I do not believe it's possible, ever, to stop or guard against grudge voting. Some of it can be pretty subtle. Some people will, for instance, inflate their votes for zeens and GMs known to be hostile toward the zeen or GM they dislike. And there are people who simply give first-rate votes to second-rate zeens or GMs ... the "reverse-grudge" or "toady" vote. What can you do? You can only hope to get few enough of these so that they will cancel each other out and/or not really much affect the outcome. Lots of ruck. (However, having several different polls, conducted by different people at different times of year, has much the same effect. You can compare poll results and discount items which are obviously out of line.)

(It's interesting Bob Sacks should bring up the unlamented former "Gemignani Poll." Peggy wrote reams of letters objecting to the use of her name and demanding it be removed from the poll, but of course Sacks ignored her. It's behavior like that which sours people on the hobby. Negativistic polls of that sort, ditto. When it was given out that the "Gemignani Poll" was all in fun, Peggy did (apparently) give her consent for the use of her name, but when it became clear that the GP was entirely negative and ugly in its purpose and outcome, she withdrew that permission. The withdrawal never did her any good, and her name remained on that poll, despite all her objections.)

((With that in mind, what do you think about Larry Peery's recent "Piss Poor Loser Award" that he's trying to give to John Michalski? Is it all in fun? Probably no more than Gemignani Poll. You have to grit your teeth and accept it, I guess. Make your opinions known and leave it at that. I've never heard of the GP before last issue, so it must not have been too big a deal? I know she was still around when I first started publishing, so how much did it really traumatize her? Sounds like so much propagandizing to me: something happens, and everybody claims it means something different from what the other guy claims. The Gemignani Poll bears a striking resemblance to Tallman's Yawner Poll. I hear no great outcry against that. Why do you suppose that is?)

((Your first paragraph is very well taken. What can you do to solve the "problem" with the polls, the grudge votes? You don't think that using more advanced statistical methods would solve the problem, I take it. How did your DW poll turn out?))

NEW BUSINESS: ETHICS

(Kathy Byrne/KATHY'S KORNER) Ethics? You really do want a 99 page zeen! I think most people could go on about this forever.

#1 - Fake zeens are ethical as long as they are done in fun, and not to do harm to the publisher. The latter happened to W, a nasty, viscious, slanderous W was sent out supposedly by us (the faker went so far as to mail it from Flushing). I can't tell you how many phone calls (irate) and nasty letters we received about our disgusting attitudes! That was unethical!

#2 - All GMs are biased, it's human nature. I think they try not to be, but it's very naive to think that everyone gets equal treatment. I recently had something happen to me that I considered unethical by a GM - I'll never play there again. The GM listed the season as Fall and said builds and Spring were due on next deadline. After correcting what I thought to be all his mistakes, I sent in builds and moves. These builds were units which supported moves! Turn comes out with - oh, sorry I made a mistake, it was really Spring - he screwed up my entire turn. Would it have killed him to send out a p.c. correction, especially in light of my, and others, moves! I don't mind correcting a GMs mistakes, but when a GM refuses to send out corrections to players who he knows didn't catch the error, then I find that unethical.

#3 - And finally "Not For Print!" (Stay cool, Kathy!) The most unethical practice I have ever seen by a publisher occurred this year when a "NFP" letter of mine was xeroxed and mailed to dozens of people! And then he stood behind a technicality and said it was my fault that he passed it all over as I didn't use the right label - I should've known the label was "Off The Record." Forgetting the ethics, whatever happened to good old common sense!

I will leave you here - otherwise I'll really get in trouble because I will blast the hobby "nit pickers."

((Evidently, most people could indeed have gone on forever about this topic - and figured they were not up to the task. So we wait an issue for the 99 pager.

((#1 - I just went back and reread the first fake WHITESTONIA (the one you're referring to), and I don't think it was intended to be as troublesome to you as it was. I may be wrong, but I got the impression that the faker was more intent on being "cute" and it backfired. I agree with you on this point, though, it's the intent that matters. Nothing helped VOLKERWANDERUNG as much as all those fakes.

((#2 - I think the incidence you cite is more one of gross incompetence than questionable ethics. It sounded like he nailed everybody, and not just a select few of you. Do you think that all GMs are biased enough to affect their games?

((#3 - The most obvious solution to this would be never to write anything interesting enough to pass. Until then, letters (no matter what the designation) will be passed along. Your passer was just looking for an excuse for his behavior, it seems. Remember the old phrase, "The best defense is a good offense." How would you have felt if he had only passed the letter to one or two people? Is it the degree of the offense that bothers you, or what? While common sense should be enough to guide folks through most situations, we live in a cynical world - some people will twist things to mean anything they want. Take KAL 007 for instance.... It would seem that Dipdom is a treacherous world. Around here, we call it "Megadip" - diplomacizing off the board for various awards, honors, positions of power (if there are such beasts), and simple dominance of others. Not pretty, but will things ever change?))

(Rod Walker) I've said reams on this subject already, in various fora. You raise some very good issues, especially on subtle biases. It seems to me that a GM must try to be ethical, but we should all recognize we're human. Mistakes are going to be made. A good deal of the time these are made because the GM did not think the situation through, so part of being ethical is obviously giving every action thorough consideration.

I expect we'd find that most GMs are not intentionalyy unethical. Creeps like "Oaklyn" don't show up that often, nor borderline cases such as Norb Reinse], to whom the question of "ethics" was simply not relevant. However, quite a few GMs probably don't think about the subject much, if at all.

Outside of the overt bad apples, the question of ethics will usually arise when a GM action is challenged. The ethics will come in when the GM responds to that challenge. Let's take your example of the GM who calls on NMRs when a friend fails to send in orders, but is lax otherwise. Once he is called on these actions, how does he respond? If he says that's the way it is and he will do as he wants (or denies the charge when it's obvious he's doing it), then he's unethical. If he says something like, "Oh, yeah, I guess I am, and that's a mistake and I won't do it that way any more and here is my firm policy in the future:..." then he's ethical. This is what I mean by GM reaction.

No, an editor is not obliged to print a "for print" item.

MORE ON...ETHICS

((My point was that something like the phone calling would be impossible for an outsider to spot. Thus, the GM is never going to be challenged on it, can never reply, and we'll never even be the wiser. Do you know of any GM that has ever challenged himself on a non-obvious topic like this?

((Is an editor obliged to grant "right of reply" to material printed in his zeen? How about if the submitter thinks it's in the realm of "right of reply," and the pubber feels it isn't (or that there is really nothing to reply to?))

(Steve Langley) In answer to Jim Meinel's question. More than once I've been up against the question, "Am I doing the right thing?" with no good idea as to the answer. I feel I'm as fair to my players as I can be.

I used to call all NMRs. I was working on the theory that NMR was an exception due to lost mail or some such. I discovered that such was not the case. Most NMR is related to lack of interest in the game. I've often been asked, "What game am I in? What country am I playing? Yeah, right, I remember... uh, what units do I have?" Such questions have put me off of phoning anyone, unless specifically requested.

What other ethics are there to discuss? Ethics are as subjective as polls. I'm sure Buddy/Bernie feels that he's justified in his methods. When one of the accepted rules of play starts out "All's fair in..." it is difficult to come up with an ethical standard.

If an ethical standard were devised, I'd probably subscribe to it, but only if I were already following it. I'm satisfied with the way I GM (I was assuming the ethics under discussion were GM ethics - publisher ethics are just as subjective). I've had some difficult (for me) decisions to make. My goal is to present the game as promptly and accurately as I can. I don't achieve the goal as closely as I'd like but I'm still working at it.

((As often as I've run into the genuinely disinterested NMR, I get "Oh, I thought the deadline was next week." So calling will never "cure" that sort of situation, it'll just be a spot fix.

((What would you think would be included in any ethical standard, and do you think it would help in those "Am I doing the right thing" situations? I'm not sure, but I think they would be unusable (and impossible to agree upon) if they covered everything. But anything less would probably be just as worthless. Interesting that you would follow such a standard, but only if it already matched what you were doing! What would be the point, then? Or is that the point?))

(Scott Hanson) I don't have much to say about ethics. It's really an individual matter. But if you were to have some sort of hobby-wide ethics for GMing, the way to implement it would be through the BNC. If you accept a Boardman Number for your game, you agree to such and such and such. At least the orphan service would have a legal basis to take action if the standards were rudely violated.

((There is some sort of system like that already - that's why the "irregular" designation is dreaded like the plague. At least it is for games that don't start out that way. I assume that you mean that everyone should just use their own common sense because there are no two situations which are alike?))

(Ed Wrobel) *As for ethics what would you and your readers do if you came into possession of some official correspondence, felt to be off-the-record at the time of writing but subsequently established as public business, which demonstrated once and for all that certain widely-respected public figures are, in truth, knaves? Personally, I'd sit on the stuff because I don't want to wake up one night and find myself personally acquainted with somebody's goon squad. Besides it's a small world and if a lightweight like me knows about it, surely it's old news to just about everybody. I don't think ethics has anything to do with it. It's a matter of practicality. You don't want to ruffle too many large feathers and find you own projects torpedoed.

((Under the Freedom Of Information act, you know we can access that correspondence any time we wish. Personally, I'd sit on it until such time as I really needed to bring it out - say, one of these well respected knaves was making wild accusations about me. Your fear is well grounded though - there are not a few folks who react unkindly to aspersions cast upon them (especially factual ones). For your own safety, and peace in Dipdom, I wouldn't publish them. Now, just hope that nobody has any similar papers written by yourself....))

(Mark Berch) This is such a vast subject that I'm afraid people will be afraid to tackle it, or the result will be very fragmented. There are actually several types of ethics here. There's GMing ethics, player ethics (player ethics, now there's a subject that only GM/pubbers are interested in, right?), publishing ethics and perhaps a vague category of "hobby ethics." Each tends to have its own standards

MORE ON...ETHICS

and traditions.

I'll instead address your questions. I see nothing unethical about NMR insurance, it's an extra "service." As for a publisher trying to "tilt the scales in a game by printing" stuff about players, this strikes me as one of those things people talk about, but I've got my doubts it's ever occurred. It would be very hard to do, and probably would work better if done in reverse - i.e. rely on the back-fire effect.

A publisher is not obligated to print anything, though I think the publisher should take on the obligation of giving a right of reply to someone attacked in the zeen, provided the response sticks to the original attack. The printing of unsubstantiated allegations is a grey area; I'm not sure it's covered by "ethics". I would say that it's unethical to print an unsubstantiated allegation if you know that it's untrue, or very unlikely to be true. I also think it's foolish to print unsubstantiated allegations in the first place, but I don't think I'd call it unethical.

((Really? Don't they take cases of "unsubstantiated allegations" to court all the time? If it's against the law to do it, doesn't that give a strong hint that it's unethical as well? Besides, of course, being weak journalism. Of course, everybody loves to gossip....

((So you feel that it is perfectly ethical for a GM to call one NMR player and not another? It's just a "service" that the GM is not obligated to perform, and thus doing it irregularly is no different than not doing it at all?

((I was not aware that there is such a thing as "player ethics." I thought that was the whole idea of the game?))

FUTURE BUSINESS

Enough of this esoteric, vague stuff for now, eh? Let's try something a bit more practical: FILING SYSTEMS: Everybody has one, even if the only file you have is a circular one. How do you organize those masses of correspondence, orders, game letters, not for print material, articles and whatnot? Hopefully, each of us has a little trick that could be adopted by somebody that needs it. So send in an outline of how you handle it - particularly if you think you have any neat tricks.

How do I do things...well, mostly I rely on my memory. The kitchen table is usually covered with paper, and I have to remember where I stuck the important folders. Fortunately, we usually eat dinner randomly about the house (when we eat here) so appropriating the table wasn't too tough. I used to keep all the old zeens in boxes in the basement. They're now in transit to a filing cabinet upstairs for easier access - fully alphabetized in hanging folders. Personal correspondence will also go into the cabinet, alphabetized, and game correspondence will go in by game.

On the kitchen table are my temporary folders. I open and read my mail, and then place the offending letter/zeen in any of the following folders: games (letters and zeens I haven't sent in orders for yet) and social mail, HOL current (stuff that will go into the next issue of this), Orders, Future Articles (for RETAL - I have stuff in that file that's two years old and still waiting to be printed). Also, I have folders with back issues of RETAL and HOL for easy access. The confusion comes in after I have adjudicated a game, answered a letter, finished with a zeen or whatever - I haven't reorganized my files to the point of actually being able to file anything yet! So I toss the paper into a box or on the floor or any other empty space. I estimate it'll take a good 100 hours to get my files in a workable condition (of which I've already gotten 1/4 finished). But when I do, it'll be worth it. In case you hadn't guessed, I save everything with the exception of envelopes. Oh, I also have a card file for addresses for RETAL and sub expiration dates, etc; and the HOL "subber" list is still not too well organized - it's still on sheets of paper. I won't be using the computer for anything more than the census at the moment - I haven't decided whether to go full word processor mode yet, and save all my out-going letters as well (something I don't do now). Well, it should be interesting to see how you all do this important little chore - and how you keep it from getting out of hand (if you can!)

I also use the enclosed sheet to keep track of my games as they go along: feel free to make copies of it if you wish. It's a very handy little item that I didn't start using until lately.

Also feel free to comment on the following:

HE WHO ENJOYS THE MUSIC MUST PAY THE PIPER

by Larry Peery

Some of you may have noticed the note on "Game Openings" on page 5 of the fall issue of DW. Many of you also received a copy of a mass letter sent out by John Caruso in the wake of this past Dipcon dealing with the allocation of Dipcon's "profits" among the hobby's various projects and services. Both are symptoms of a real problem the hobby faces, the lack of a dependable financial source for the hobby's various projects and services. This problem grows increasingly great as the hobby expands in size and attempts to improve the quality and quantity of services it offers its members. Yet, each time the subject

MORE ON...PAYING THE PIPER

of finding a steady, independent common source of income for the hobby is raised; it is either shouted down by those who claim that the hobby is, after all, just a hobby, just for fun, and the thought of living by any other than "hand to mouth" is undemocratic, unAmerican, and unDiplomatic! Those who need the financial help - who usually are the people in the hobby who provide its various services and carry on its projects - and who are usually the people in the hobby most vocal in support of the hobby are usually too embarrassed to admit they need the help and, besides, somehow it just doesn't seem tight to go asking for a handout, etc. etc. So, to date, nothing has been done except in a haphazard and voluntary fashion.

As one of the few people in the hobby's movers and doers group who has no vested interest in its financial wherewithall I have decided to take it upon myself to present the following proposal to the hobby. I think I made a similar proposal before but I never pushed it. Others, for all I know, may have made similar proposals that I am not aware of. The point is that something along these lines needs to be implemented and soon. The 25th anniversary of the hobby seems like a good time to consider what, for want of a more palatable name, I'll call a DIPTAX. You can call it a tax, and service charge, whatever.

My proposal is quite simple. I suggest that the hobby levy a \$1 per player tax on each original player in any PBM regular or variant game or on each original participant in a FTF Dippy convention/tournament game. This would not include replacement players in PBM games or "just for fun" games at home.

All proceeds from the tax would be sent to the BNC or MNC and it would be the responsibility of each PBM pubber/GM or con host to collect the tax and transvit it to the BNC/MNC. They, through their records, would be able to keep track of the various funds.

A committee of five individuals, including the BNC, the MNC, and the editor of DW, and two members of the hobby at large (coopted onto the committee by the three institutional members) would be responsible for the disbursement of the collected funds for hobby services and project workers.

Although I favor a mandatory system I realize there is no chance of enacting one. Therefore a voluntary system is the only possible one, and would have to rely on the cooperation of the hobby's pubbers and the effect of publicizing those who do and those who do not cooperate.

I propose an effective starting date of January 1, 1984 starting with Boardman number 1984A.

And, as a matter of record, I will note that I intend to collect said DIPTAX on all PBM games or FTF dippy con/tournament games I host during 1984. If no committee is established per my proposal I will simply forward the money to the BNC and let her/him worry about how to disburse it.

I will be watching with great interest to see how the hobby react to this proposal.

((Well, folks, how about it? Do you think this is a good idea or what? Do you plan to participate? So as not to bias the discussion, I think I'll hold back on my comments for now -- feel free to send in any comments you may have for print to me. If you want to discuss it further with Larry first, that's fine with me. I had quite a bit to say, and you'll see most of it next month.

((I hope y'all don't miss the addresses this month (let me know if you do), no room for them.

((It doesn't look like there's any GOING STEADY this month. Mark?

((One more announcement that I should be able to fit in:

*Speaking of which (new section - this is for your general announcements), as you may or may not know, POLITESSE, the Dale City Report of ftf Diplomacizing, has been taking tentative steps to expand its geographical base beyond BaltoWashNoVa. Our goal has always been to encourage quality, ftf gaming. Because traveling long distances requires time and money, we've been a bit regional in our outlook. Mark Luedi recently suggested that POLITESSE carry announcements of cons from all over. I'm certainly willing to do at least that much; news of cons usually comes out in postal zeens originating from the same area, so that may be no great service. It would be nice to provide a link for groups across the country interested in ftf play. What I like are lively reports of cons, something beyond who was there and who won. Such reports also come out in various postal zeens; I've asked one or two pubbers for permission to reprint con reports. What I'd like to do now is ask all of the pubbers reading this to:

- 1) Let me know about upcoming ftf gatherings
 - 2) Send me articles on such gatherings, either for reprint or in the original
 - 3) Mention this project briefly in your zeens and suggest that others interested in ftf play contact me
- (and if you send me a courtesy copy, I'll tell you about our liberal subbing/trading policy)

I publish at the end of the month.

((The above is from Ed Wrobel, 3932 N Forestdale Ave, Dale City, VA 22193. Sounds interesting. I think the best report of a con I've read recently was in Terry Tallman's NSWG - you couldn't figure out who was there, what strategies (if any) were used, but it sure was fun to read! If all con reports were more like that.... The "I played Italy in round 1, and moved so and so. Austria moved blah blah. Turkey blatherblather, Russia blah, and England blah." -- type reports just bore me to death. Well, this is it for now, see you next month!))

(11)

GM'S HELPER

Boardman Number: _____

Zeen: _____, _____, _____,

_____, _____, _____

GM: _____, _____, _____,

_____, _____, _____

THE PLAYERS

AUSTRIA: _____, _____, _____,

_____, _____, _____

ENGLAND: _____, _____, _____,

_____, _____, _____

FRANCE: _____, _____, _____,

_____, _____, _____

GERMANY: _____, _____, _____,

_____, _____, _____

ITALY: _____, _____, _____,

_____, _____, _____

RUSSIA: _____, _____, _____,

_____, _____, _____

TURKEY: _____, _____, _____,

_____, _____, _____

SUPPLY CENTERS

	<u>01</u>	<u>02</u>	<u>03</u>	<u>04</u>	<u>05</u>	<u>06</u>	<u>07</u>	<u>08</u>	<u>09</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>23</u>
<u>A</u>	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
<u>E</u>	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
<u>F</u>	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
<u>G</u>	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
<u>I</u>	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
<u>R</u>	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
<u>T</u>	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

NOTES:

Kinder, Küche, und Kirche

CHILDREN, KITCHEN, AND CHURCH
(none of which is as important as Dip!)

#3

OCTOBER, 1983

is a semi-official, semi-occasional, semi-semi newsletter of the US/OGP ORPHAN SERVICE. If your Orphan needs service or just a tune-up, you can call either of our experienced mechanics:

Dick Martin, 26 Orchard Way N, Rockville MD 20854 301-762-1761
Scott Hanson, 233 Oak Grove #306, Minneapolis MN 55403 612-874-0082

THANKS TO ALL OF YOU

who volunteered when I put out a call for help for a couple assistants for this baby. But, that was before I knew I would be getting Dick as a partner. So we won't be needing any more help in that regard. However, I do have all your names and addresses so ~~I can write for in the middle of the night~~ we can use you either to GM or be a standby in orphan games. And we will be needing you, because....

JOINT BNC/ORPHAN SERVICE PROJECT

Kathy Byrne is getting together with Dick and I to track down any games that have started since 1978 that are missing. We're guessing that this is about 70 games, so it will be quite a massive undertaking. We know we can handle it though, but we will need GMs and standbys for any games we restart. Watch upcoming issues of EVERYTHING and HOUSE OF LORDS (Dick's pubbers' zine) for lists of games we are looking for (maybe you are in one or more!) and let Dick or I know if you can take or standby in any games. We will be using the RETALIATION and IRKSOME standby lists, but that won't be emf!

FINANCES

Robert Sacks was holding \$130 for orphan games; Dick has already received half of that and the other half should be on its way to me (right Robert?). We will be getting a share of the Dipcon money, but I haven't heard anything about that for a while. I also understand that we will be getting a share of some project that Mike Mills is running, but have heard nothing personally from Mike. Any and all donations are welcome, since the cost of xeroxing and postage does add up.

BUSINESS

BOB ARNETT: Zine officially declared dead. Dick sent out restart notices for 81CW and 82F. ELMER HINTON: One of his games was taken over by John Caruso by player request, I don't know the number. DON SIGWALT: 79KR was abandoned awhile ago out of player disinterest. The players became interested again, so it's now being run by Dick with Don as a player. Other games winding down in Hoof and Mouth. MIKE BARNO: The Shogun's Sword is dead. He said he'd transfer games to Cathy Cuning, but has done nothing. Dick has sent out restart notices for 82HP and 80IM, and contacted guest GMs of 82E and 81AX. TERRY TALLMAN: Games slow, but still running. We received a complaint on 82IJ, but there is no player consensus on moving the game. It will probably stay in NSWG with a guest GM. ADDITIONAL BARNO: Cuning has said she'll restart 81HS. I've heard rumours that she has sent out a 1st copy of CATHY'S RAMBLINGS, but have not seen it.

OTHER STUFF

Gary Coughlan has graciously offered us full use of his collection of zines should we need it...thanks Gary! Dick will be starting an orphan's-only flyer to handle restarts, plus offer distribution to any guest GMs whose zines have disappeared. ~~TEA~~ couple other people are thinking of orphan's-only zines as well. After this, KKK will only go directly to a few people. We'll keep in touch with the hobby through EVERYTHING and HOUSE OF LORDS. If you really want to keep getting this, you'll have to pay for it. (25¢ a time.)

Things are going well. Thanks for your help. Keep it up!

Take care,
Dick & Scott

LISTING OF LOST GAMES

The following games have been "lost" by the BNC. That is, there is no present notion if or where these games are being run. If you can fill in any of the blank spaces regarding these games, that would be a great help both to the BNC and the Orphan Service. If you recognize any of these, please contact Kathy Byrne (160-02 43rd Ave, Flushing, NY 11358) if the game has been finished or totally abandoned by players and GM alike; or Scott Hanson (233 Oak Grove, #306, Minneapolis, MN 55403) or Dick Martin (26 Orchard Way N, Rockville, MD 20854) if there is any hope of restarting an orphan. If the game still happens to be running, or has ended with a final chart and all the usual amenities, please contact Kathy with that info. Thanks.

The number of "lost" games may surprise you, it surprised me. Following is a listing, by year, of lost games. First is the Boardman number, followed by the year the game began in, and then the original GM. Thanks for any leads this may help turn up, go to Don Ditter, who compiled the original version of this list.

<u>BN</u>	<u>1978</u>	<u>ZEEN</u>	<u>GM</u>
N		Arrakis	Hayward
x		Claw & Fang	Weswig
ch		Claw & Fang	Forte
fa		Claw & Fang	Baumeister
hc		Claw & Fang	Weswig
b		Cum Grand Salis	Parkanyi
d		Cum Grand Salis	Parkanyi
kb		General Stab	Dumas
kn		Le Front	Oaklyn
am		Master Machiavellian	Kershaw
ai		Mixumaxu Gazette	Lipton
cy		Mixumaxu Gazette	Lipton
kp		Mixumaxu Gazette	Lipton
fe		Non Sequitur	Jarvinen
cv		Pink Dragon	Van Caem
iq		Pink Dragon	Palter
hi		Podunk News	Hartwig
hx		Ruritania	Watson
hm		Stratosphere	Fabry
hb		Suicide	Cook
fh		Vanguard	Hill
al		Wargamer's Tabloid	Evans
ad		Warmonger	Callahan
ck		Warmonger	Moon
ij		Warmonger (abandoned?)	Rowland
1979ah		Against the Odds	Reges
ch		Arrakis	Head
q		Brouhaha	White
x		Claw & Fang	McMillie
cx		Claw & Fang	Lowenstern
aj		The Diplomat	Stapel
am		The Diplomat	Stapel
ay		The Diplomat	Kypanides
cc		General Stab	Dumas
kj		General Stab	Dumas
cy		Havoc	Gottesman
it		Havoc	Gottesman

BN 1979

j, p
ap
i

1980ai
hu, kj

aa

lc

iq

hn

cp

ld

h

lg, lh, li, 1

lj, lk

ht

kf

1981ar

cb

iw, iy

kg

ca

m

hb

ZEEN

LDNS

Passchendaele

Warmonger

C. A. B.

Black Frog

Claw & Fang

Gregory Dick

Invasion

(no zeen)

Le Front

Plague Times

Ruritania

Tel Amifar Journal

Tetracuspid

(no zeen)

Born to Dip (abandoned?)

(no zeen)

Field of Fire

Le Front

Plague Times

White Duke

xerox internet

GM

Jones

Cuerrier

Rowland

La Breche

Masters

Horton

Dick

Schnier

Lazaro

Oaklyn

Bates

Watson

Stewart

Blasland

Tyler

Wilson

Dick

Fry

Stafford

Bates

Shaddix

Woods.

That's all I have at the moment. If possible, it would be nice to see this list reprinted a few times rather than the latest rating system (hint hint). Maybe it'll do some good, who knows?

Some of these games look like they may just have been lost in a fold, like Tel Amifar Journal. Some never got off the ground, like 81AR. A few probably ended, but the BNC just didn't get a copy for one reason or another. Others were just plain overlooked when the endgame reports were run. Whatever the reason, we don't know what happened to these games. Please help us out! Thanks. --DM

Dick Martin
26 Orchard Way N
Rockville, MD 20854
phone 301-762-1761

FIRST CLASS